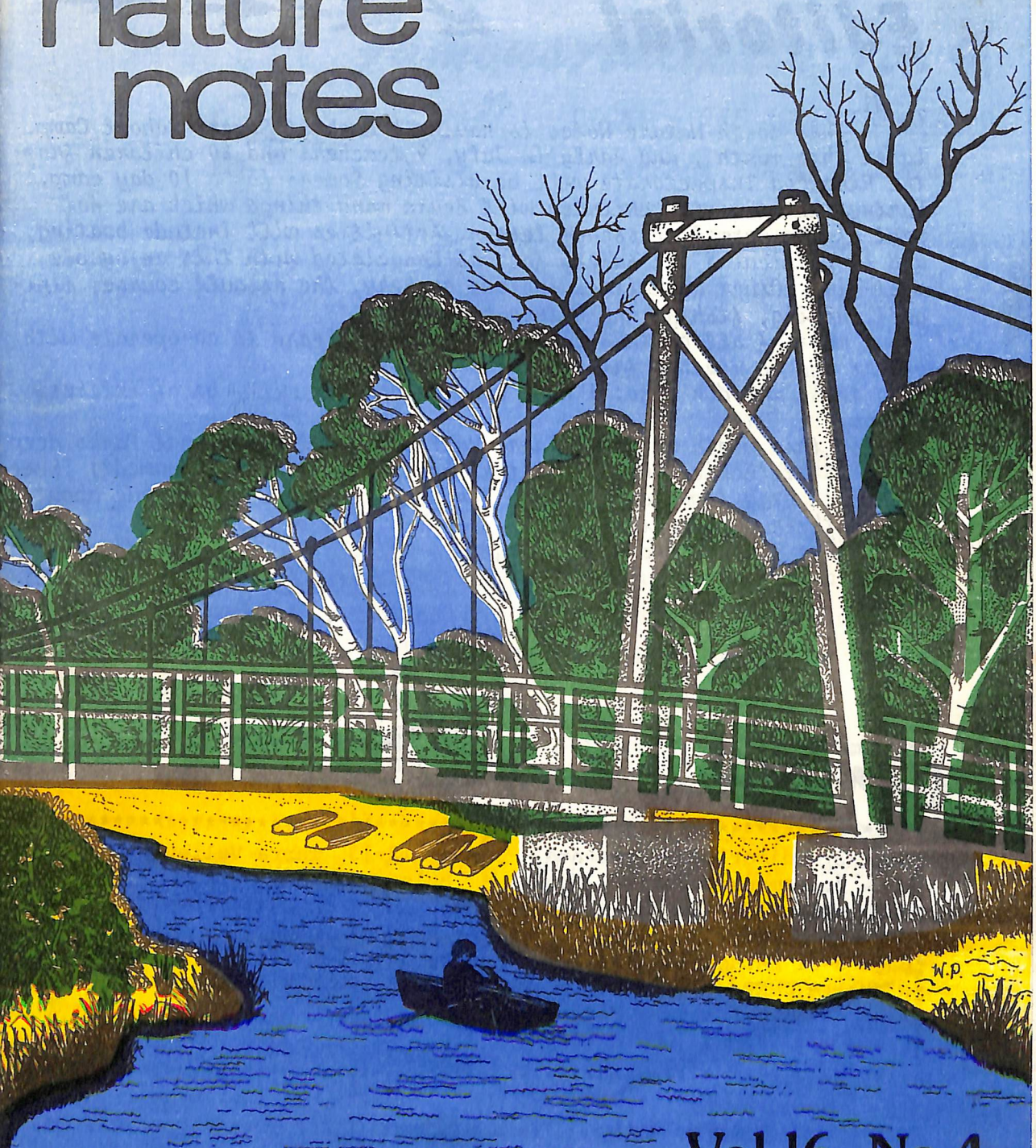


# nature notes



P.O. BOX 28 Ringwood East.

June 1979.

Vol.16. No.4.

# Editorial



HI,

This month Nature Notes is having a look at Somers School Camp. Later this month, and early in July, 9 teachers and 80 children from the Ringwood Inspectorate will be visiting Somers for a 10 day camp. During that time the children will learn many things which are not part of the normal classroom lesson. Activities will include boating, and in particular the safety factors associated with this enjoyable past-time. Other activities include archery, the assault course, mini-golf, hiking, fishing and nature-craft.

But most of all on this camp, the children learn to co-operate with others and to make new friends.

To those who don't go, I hope you the article will be of interest to you.

Also this month we visit Tarra Valley and Bulga National Parks deep in the Strzeleckie Ranges. (After whom are these Ranges named?) There is also a very important message for you from the Gould League about one of their publications.

'Bye for now and don't forget to write.

*Colin Bull*

Editor....

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## Famous Animals. No 4.



### COCKY - THE JOKING COCKATOO.

Perhaps the most famous of the many white cockatoos called Cocky was the one kept in a pub on the Adelaide River earlier this century.

Cocky picked up all the slang he heard in the bar, but his best imitation was that of two logs fighting. Many times customers would come rushing into the hotel to throw out the fighting dogs, only to find Cocky strutting up and down on his perch enjoying himself immensely.

Cocky's worst trick was played on the teamsters who came to the pub. These men used teams of pack-horses to pull large wagons overland. They trained these horses extremely well, so that they would obey the teamsters' spoken commands. When asked to stop, the horses would stand waiting patiently for their masters' word to begin. Of course Cocky soon learnt these words and took great delight in sending off the horse teams at full pace whilst the teamsters were still in the bar relaxing!



# Somers School

## SOMERS....THE IDEA.

State School No. 4647, Children's Health and Recreation Camp was opened in February 1947, at Crow's Nest Queenscliff in a camp leased from the Army. After functioning for several years, this camp was forced to close when the Army resumed the area.

School camping at Somers commenced in September 1959. This was made possible by the interest and enthusiasm of the then Chief Inspector of Primary Schools, Mr. O. C. Phillips.

The camp planners aimed at giving Victorian Primary children an opportunity to share in the experience of community living in a healthy, happy environment. The camp, being residential, is able to give a more complete experience than is possible in the normal school. The academic side of the curriculum is modified and much greater emphasis is placed on outdoor activities:-Environmental Studies, Physical Education, Boating. Camp rules and procedures also help to develop the sense of community responsibility at which the camp aims. Up to the end of 1978, some 60,000 children and over 3000 teachers have experienced camp life at Somers.

## SOMERS....THE SITE.

The camp buildings were erected in 1940 for the RAAF to be used as an Initial Training Centre and many Victorian airmen passed through the camp during the war years. After the war, the camp was purchased by a private group, who made extensive alterations, and for some time ran the camp as "Feature Holidays".

The Commonwealth Government reacquired the area to cope with the growing influx of migrants, and at its peak provided accommodation for 1500 migrants. When no longer needed for this purpose, the camp was purchased

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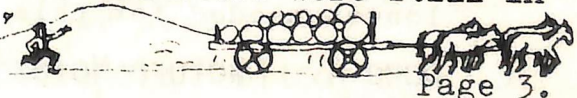
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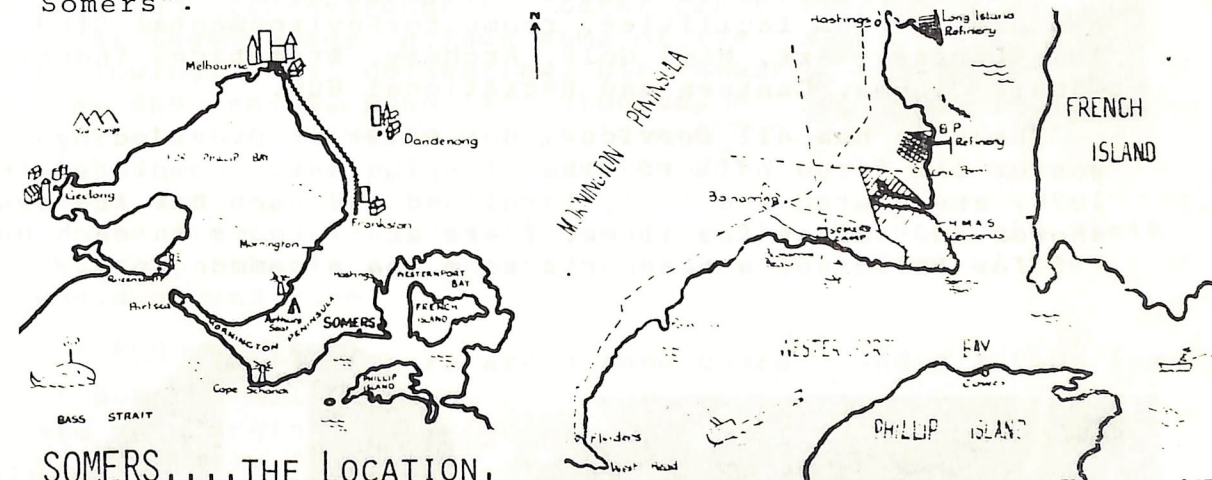
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# Camp No. 4647

by the Education Department and altered by the Public Works Department to the requirements of a school camp.

The camp was opened in September 1959 with the entry of 100 boys from the St.Kilda Inspectorate. The official opening on the 27th November was carried out by the then Governor of Victoria, His Excellency Sir Dallas Brooks. In August 1976, four new dormitory blocks (replacing all existing sleeping huts) were used for the first time.

Since 1959 all Victorian Inspectorates have sent children for a TEN day stay at "Children's School Camp, Somers".



## SOMERS....THE LOCATION.

The camp is situated in a Pastoral Area, eleven kilometres from Hastings, overlooking Westernport Bay. There are extensive views of Phillip Island, the Nobbies, Seal Rocks and West Head at Flinders. Adjoining the camp is the Lord Somers' Camp and historic Coolart Homestead.

See if you can find out what West Head is used for. Also, Coolart Homestead was used in a recent Australian Film starring Noel Ferrier. What was the name of the film?

Safe beaches and a bushland setting make an ideal site for a wide variety of organized activities.

Nature Notes is a Ringwood Inspectorate Publication. 5

# Somers School

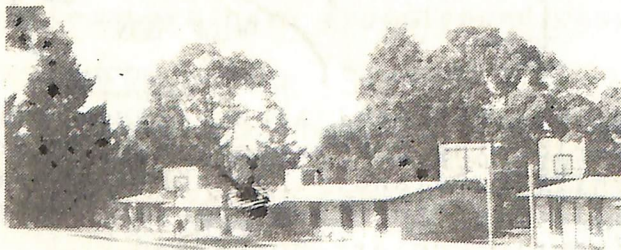
The camp is sheltered from the sea by a belt of coastal scrub in which banksias and tea tree predominate. Though through this timbered area flows the Merricks Creek which is tidal at times and closed by a sand bar at other times.

Somers township, primarily a holiday resort which is growing steadily, is situated to the east of the camp and Balnarring Beach township 2 kilometres to the west.

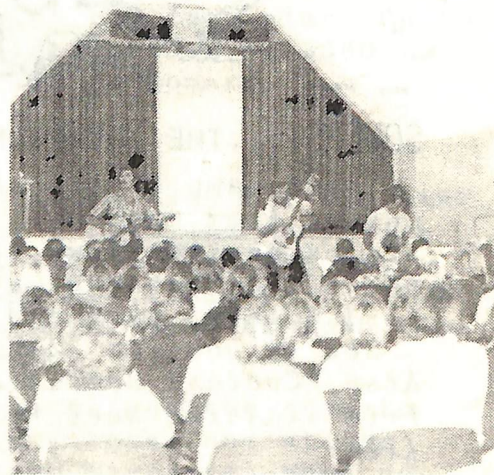
## SOMERS....THE FACILITIES:

The camp buildings include sleeping huts, kitchen and dining room facilities, rooms for Environmental Studies, Library, Art, Mini Golf, Archery, Dramatics, Indoor Games, Cinema, Canteen and Recreational Hut.

The camp has all services. Hot water is provided by gas or oil fired boilers. The sleeping huts, completed in 1976, are heated and fully furnished and each has its own shower and toilet facilities. There are 7 rooms in each hut - 5 for children, a teacher's room and a common room.



Sleeping Quarters  
at Somers



Morning Assembly

# Camp No. 4647

## CAMP ACTIVITIES.....

--Boating The children who visit the camp experience several sessions of boating, during which they learn about the basic parts of a boat, safety rules, and the skills required for safe handling and care of boats.

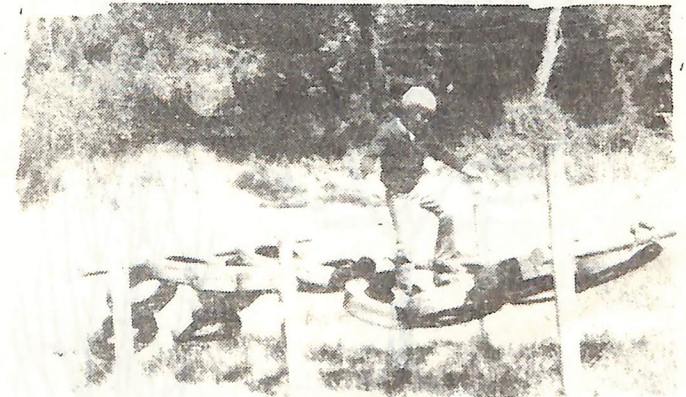
--Environmental Studies The first Environmental Studies lesson on the camp introduces the children to the camp and its environment. Later practical lessons may include some of the following; shell collecting, bird studies and census, pond life studies, rock platform studies, reptile and amphibian census, plant flowering patterns and coastline studies.

The aim of the program is to give all children who visit the camp a basic appreciation and understanding of the world around them.

--Rope Courses There are 3 rope courses and a flying fox at Somers. All courses are challenging, yet vary greatly in objectives as well as design.

There are many other great activities at Somers, but unfortunately we do not have room to write about them.

Information for this article supplied by Children's School Camp, Somers.



## NESTS

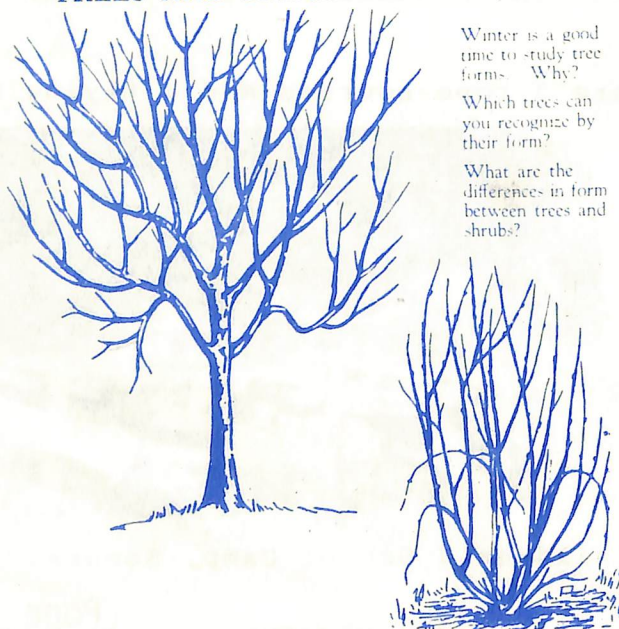
Rather than build new ones, some birds repair the old nests from earlier nestings.

Try to name the birds that have built these two nests.



Which birds are beginning to nest in your district already?

## TREES AND SHRUBS IN WINTER



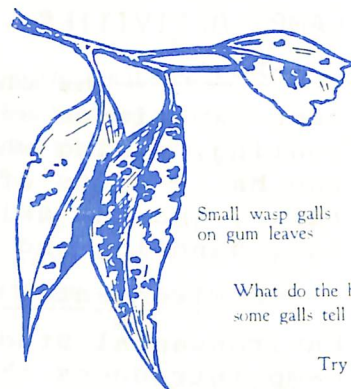
Winter is a good time to study tree forms. Why?

Which trees can you recognize by their form?

What are the differences in form between trees and shrubs?

# Things to look for in:

## GALLS



Small wasp galls on gum leaves

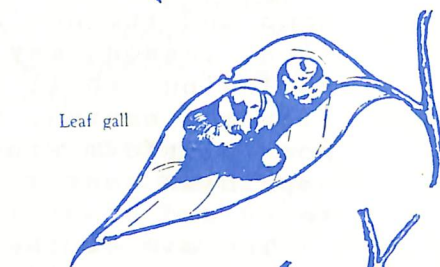
What do the holes in some galls tell us?

Try to find different kinds of galls.



Stem gall

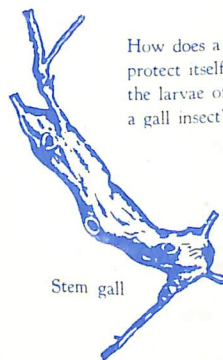
Leaf gall



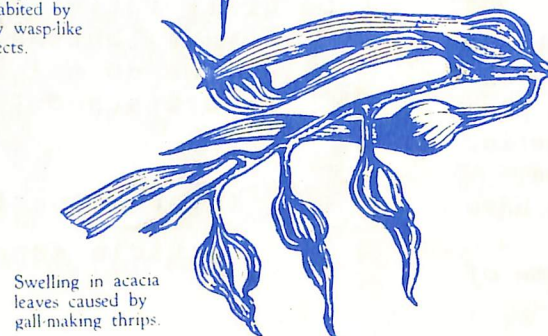
How does a tree protect itself from the larvae of a gall insect?



Leaf gall inhabited by tiny wasp-like insects.

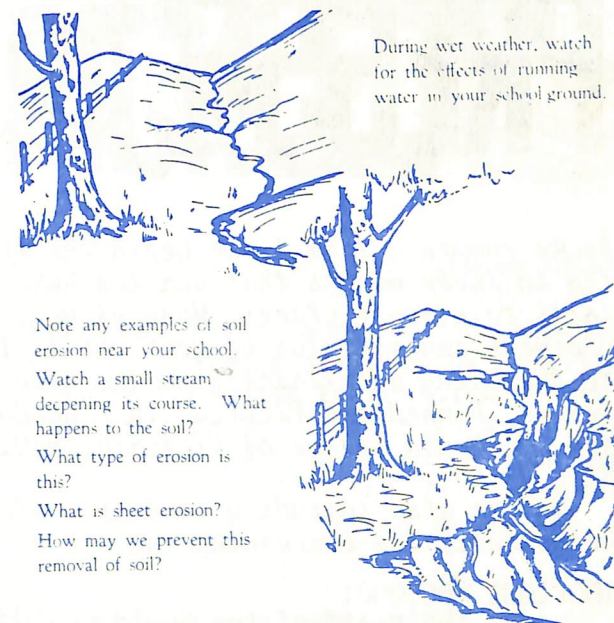


Stem gall



Swelling in acacia leaves caused by gall-making thrips.

## SOIL EROSION BY RUNNING WATER



During wet weather, watch for the effects of running water in your school ground.

Note any examples of soil erosion near your school.

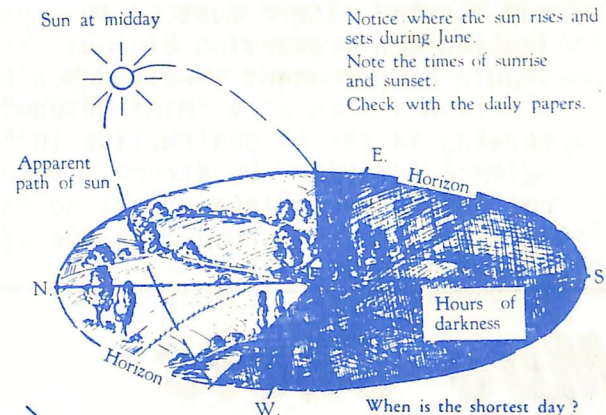
Watch a small stream deepening its course. What happens to the soil?

What type of erosion is this?

What is sheet erosion?

How may we prevent this removal of soil?

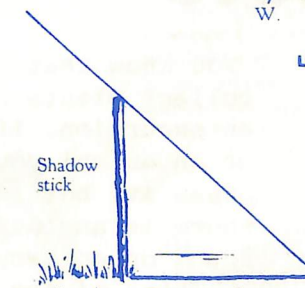
## SUN BEHAVIOUR



Notice where the sun rises and sets during June. Note the times of sunrise and sunset. Check with the daily papers.

When is the shortest day?

## LENGTH OF SHADOW



Why should the length of shadow be measured at midday?

On your shadow stick note the length of shadow at midday on:  
 June 6.....  
 June 13.....  
 June 20.....  
 June 27.....  
 July 4.....

Why do these lengths vary? What is the difference in lengths of the shadow on June 6 and June 27?

JUNE



As we commence term 2, we begin the longest term. So it is generally in these months that our teachers plan our excursions and visits to strange places. Many of you, no doubt, will want to keep specimens and mementos of your visit. In Nature Notes this month we are featuring an extract from the recent Gould League Publication, *Pressed, Pinned and Pickled*. This handy little booklet is available from the Gould League of Victoria, P.O. Box 446, Prahan, 3181. The price is 50¢.

We are also including in this article an important message from the Gould League concerning the use of this booklet.

#### Important Message:

The staff of the Gould League of Victoria is deeply concerned with the misuse of the booklet, *PRESSED, PINNED and Pickled*. There must be an important reason for collecting and preserving biological specimens. Collections should be permanent, well described and have a useful function; such as a "Mini Museum". Collecting and preserving is far too destructive to be used as just another Science Activity. We strongly recommend that indiscriminate collecting be avoided at all costs.

Gould League of Victoria.

## Mug Shots



You know that it is not always possible to collect plants or animals when you are on an excursion. If you cannot collect a plant or an animal you cannot set it in plastic, press it, bottle it up, or pin it down, there is another way to show what you have found on an excursion.

Think of some of the places and some of the specimens you could not collect.

## -NED+

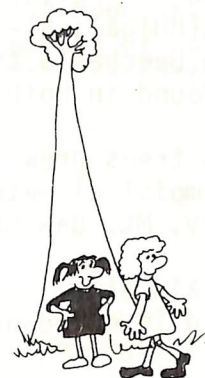
## PICKLED



With a CAMERA you can collect photographs of what you have found.

There are many uses for a camera on an excursion. Protected plants and animals are not the only things you cannot actually take back to school with you. For example, it would be impossible to take a big tree back to school. A camera can help you to show other things that you could not collect on your excursion.

Activity 1.. Think of 5 things you could not collect as specimens.



**THE CAMERA:** Because you need photographs of different things you will need the best camera you or your school can afford to buy. A simple camera can be useful, but the best camera for the job is a REFLEX CAMERA. This type of camera is best for excursions for two reasons:

1. You can actually see what you are photographing.
2. You can change lens to take good pictures of very small things, very big things or things a long way off.

Unfortunately, good reflex cameras are expensive. Your school may have a reflex camera that you could borrow, or someone in a camera shop could show you a reflex camera and how it works.

#### MINI SHOTS

Taking photographs of small things, like wildflowers, is hard because you have to get very close to the thing you want a picture of. If you have a reflex camera you can get special equipment to take close-up photographs of small things. Your teacher, or someone in a camera shop could explain this equipment to you.

Elastic extension tubes, which fit standard 35mm cameras, may be purchased from photography suppliers.



#### LONG SHOTS

Taking photographs of animals or birds is hard because they are very shy. Wild life photographers use reflex cameras with special lenses. These lenses, called TELEPHOTO LENSES, act like a telescope. Using a telephoto lens you can get a good photograph of an animal or bird without getting too close.



Drawings reproduced with permission of the Gould League...



# Tarra Valley and Bulga

J. HOPE....

## National Parks

Hidden away amongst the valleys of the Strzeleckie Ranges are the Tarra Valley and Bulga National Parks. Less than 100 years ago fern gullies like these could be found throughout the Ranges. Today all but a few remain. Tarra Valley and Bulga are two examples of these beautiful gullies.

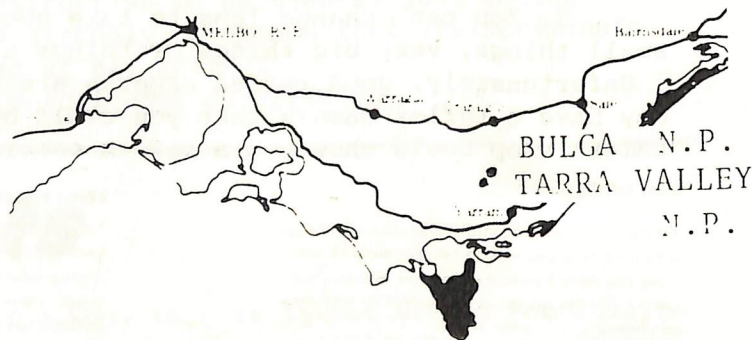
These two National Parks are amongst the smallest in Australia, comprising 81 hectares (Tarra Valley) and 121 hectares (Bulga). Although they're small, they are unique. Ancient Myrtle Beeches (a type of tree) estimated at over 1000 years old are to be found in both Parks.

10,000 years ago, during an Ice Age, myrtle beech trees grew where Melbourne now stands. These trees need a cool, moist climate so now they only grow in The Otways, Cumberland Valley, Mt. Baw Baw and in the Strzeleckie Ranges.

As the area of the parks receive over 1500 mm of rainfall annually, the vegetation is lush. Tree ferns are found in abundance particularly in the damp cool gullies.

### TARRA VALLEY:

Tarra Valley has several magnificent waterfalls, easily accessible by good walking tracks. Many species of birds abound in the park as well as numerous possums, snakes and even platypus.



### BULGA

Bulga is the Aboriginal word for High Place or mountain. This park has particularly beautiful ferns. A nature walk which takes approximately an hour has been developed. If you visit the park it is recommended that you take this picturesque and educational walk.

From the car park and Rangers' Office, the Nature Walk includes

towering Mountain Ash up to 85 metres in height, Myrtle Beeches, Corrigan's Suspension Bridge, numerous ferny glades, fungi, ancient Myrtle Beeches as well as the Lyrebird Pool where these timid birds can occasionally be glimpsed drinking.

### CORRIGAN'S BRIDGE:

This suspension bridge is named after the Alberton Shire Engineer who had it moved from Alberton West (near Yarram) in 1938 to give visitors to the park a unique view of a fern gully.

Both Parks are well worth visiting and can be reached after a 3-4 hour drive from Melbourne. They are unique rainforests well worthy of our preservation.

\*\*\*\*\*

# Victoria's new parks

"Croajingolong, Coopracambra, Pink Lakes, Wabonga Plateau, Tingaringy ..... the names of Victoria's new parks catch your attention immediately. And the parks themselves are outstanding, taking in some of Victoria's finest natural environment- remote beaches, forested ranges river gorges and expanses of Mallee heath and cypress pine; all with a wealth of plant and animal life- and historical features as well."

### CENTENARY PARKS:

Australia's first National Park, Royal National Park near Sydney, was created in April 1879. The establishment of 4 new national parks, and 16 other parks managed by the National Parks Service, is a most appropriate way to celebrate the centenary of that significant event.

### CROAJINGOLONG NATIONAL PARK.

This magnificent park takes in all the coastline and hinterland from Sydenham Inlet to the N.S.W. border, incorporating the existing Captain James Cook, Wingam Inlet and Mallacoota Inlet National Parks.

The other 3 National Parks are the SNOWY RIVER NATIONAL PARK, TINGARINGY NATIONAL PARK and the BAW BAW NATIONAL PARK. All the parks are found in Gippsland. All of these parks are in the highland regions of Victoria with Tingaringy adjoining the KOSCIUSKO N. P. on the Vic.-N. S.W. BORDER.

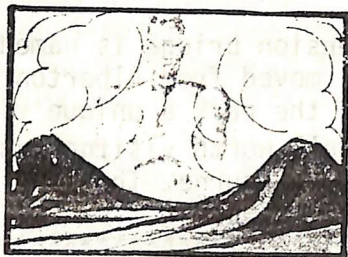
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LEGEND TIME.

## Rain of Peace.



Many years ago there lived two big men who spent most of their time quarrelling and fighting.



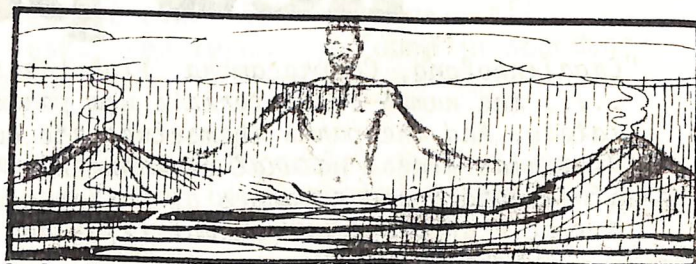
They fought so much that Bunjil the Great Spirit grew angry and changed them into mountains.



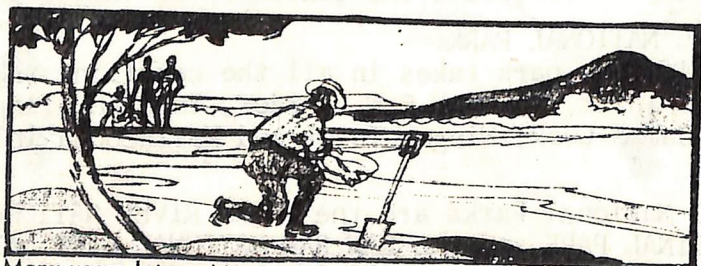
But even then they would not stop their fighting and often threw huge stones at each other.



Sometimes they became so angry that hot fires leapt from their mouths and people were afraid.



So Bunjil sent the rain of peace to put out the fires and the raindrops caught the flames and the golden sunlight and dropped them to the ground. Then the mountains were peaceful for ever.



Many years later white men found gold near the mountains; but the black men knew that this gold was the fire and sunlight caught by the rain of peace when the mountains were at war.

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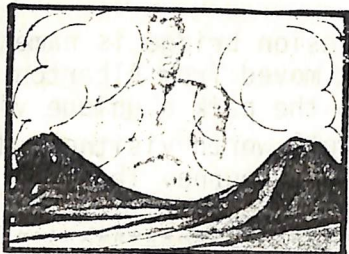
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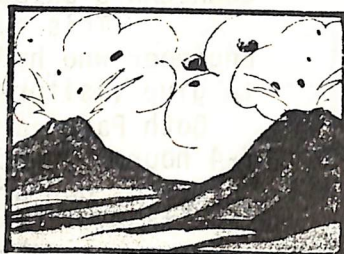
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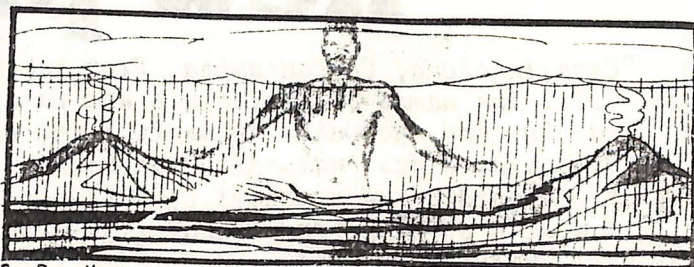
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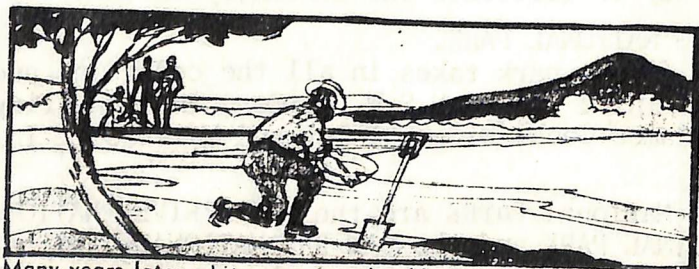
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## Prize Letter



Again this month several interesting letters arrived at Nature Notes. It was very difficult to choose the "Prize" Letter, but in the end it was given to Ruth Bulley of Camberwell who wrote about a spider. Other very interesting letters came from Fiona Sutherland and Lara Hoffman, both of whom attend Blackburn Lake P.S. Thank-you very much girls for your letters.

Now here is Ruth's prize letter.

Dear Mr. Bull, About 3 weeks ago we found a big spider making a web over our driveway between two trees. The spider is greyish white. It has a very big body with a white stripe across it. It has a white head with lots of black 'eyes' on it, and it has black fangs in front. Its legs have hairy parts on the back two. The front four are red and black.

It started by spinning a triangular frame for the web and then, made the round web in front of it. The web looked beautiful with the rain on it. We think it must be an Orb Weaving Spider.

It catches insects in the web and sucks their insides out. Sometimes it throws down bits of the insect it can't eat. It must have about 14 wrapped up bits of insect in its web. Even though we've had a few storms, the spider is still here, with the web intact. I think it spins a new web every night. We borrowed a book about spiders from the Library, but it didn't have a picture of our spider in it. So we would like to know if it is an Orb Weaving Spider or is it another type of spider?

Yours Sincerely,  
RUTH BULLEY.

EDITOR'S NOTE: After reading your description we looked through several books and found a picture of a spider fitting your description. The picture was found in "Spiders in Australia," text by Ramon Mascord. The book is a Mulavon Publication from A.H. & A.W. Reed. Page 8.

Thank-you Ruth for such a detailed description and excellent observing, your book award will arrive shortly.

# PUZZLES

## TWO-IN-ONES :

L T I E O R N R I E R

(Take away the cat & leave the dog.)

E S H A M R U K

(Take away the bird & leave the fish.)

W H U N A T S M A S N P

(Take away the insect & leave the spider.)

D A W F A F T O D I T L E

(Take away the flower & leave the tree.)



## ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, AND MINERAL

Taking one letter from each group of three and working from top to bottom, see if you can find: i, the name of an animal (beginning with B); ii, a vegetable (beginning with S); and iii, a mineral ore (beginning with U). They are all seven-letter words.



## THE CATERPILLAR PUZZLE

Here is a caterpillar with his name spelt out clearly on him. How many words can you make from the letters in his name?



S	B	U
U	R	P
F	I	A
N	N	F
A	I	A
C	U	L
M	H	O

